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REMARKS

Applicants' invention is directed to articles of manufacture comprising a core material and a surface material, wherein the core material is a wood composite and the surface material is a high pressure laminate. In accordance with the invention the wood composite is bonded to the high pressure laminate with a foamed polyvinyl acetate emulsion-based adhesive. Articles of manufacture encompassed by the invention include countertops, architectural panels, flipper doors and the like.

The examiner maintains the rejection of claims 12-14 and 21 as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, as being obvious over Karszes (U.S. Patent No. 3,891,788), the rejection of claims 12-17, 21 and 22 as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, as being obvious over Mafoti et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,804,618, and claim 18 as being obvious over Karszes in view of Mafoti et al.

The examiner continues to urge that the use of a foamed adhesive is a process limitation that carries no patentable weight unless shown to produce a different product. It is the examiner's position that applicants' arguments that use of a foamed adhesive produce a patentable distinct product is not convincing of patentability since applicants have failed to provide factual support to the allegations presented.

Applicants disagree. The examiner is referred to the following disclosures:

Aqueous liquid adhesives require significant drying times, require long set or cure times, and the water contained within them tends to swell surface and/or core materials. It is known, for example, that countertops prepared with prior art adhesives are prone to warpage. This warpage is generally due to water in the bondline and heat from the oven. Page 1, lines 15-16

By foaming, less water is introduced into the construction, the temperature requirements of the top heaters may be decreased, and line speed may be increased. The foamed adhesive when used in the practice of the invention has sufficient wet bond strength for holding sheets of high

pressure laminate (HPL) to sheets of particle board as these panels are moved through a heating and pressing zone. Page 3, lines 4-9.

By decreasing the amount of water in the bondline, oven temperatures can be decreased, lowering cost and decreasing the potential for warpage of the product. Moreover, since the boards can be run at lower oven temperatures, use of thinner HPL is possible. Page 9, lines 6-8.

And,

the results shown in Table 1.

There is no disclosure in the prior art of an article comprising a wood composite and a high pressure laminate bonded together with a foamed polyvinyl acetate based adhesive. The product when newly bonded will contain less water/less adhesive - minimizing warping. The final fully dried product will comprise less adhesive residue and, upon inspection, will show the presence of air voids.

It is surprising that sufficient wet bond strength exists to form the claimed product, let alone form a product that exhibits required fiber tear attributes for end use applications.

The claimed invention is novel and non-obvious over the prior art, and represents an important contribution to the art.

Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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